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THE INQUEST UPON THE BODY OF ARTHUR KEMP.

STRUGGLES IN LIFE.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PROGRESS OF RUIN.

Six months had passed away since Miss Penelope's projected visit to her cousin Leonard was to have

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taken place. But Penelope Chester was subject to the common law which stamps uncertainty on all mortal plans and purposes. When the appointed time arrived, she was once again on a bed of pain and sickness; and many weeks elapsed before she

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could even leave her chamber. At length intelligence reached the expectant Marsdens, that the day was finally fixed for the journey, and that the approaching Christmas was to be spent in London by cousin Penelope and her unwearied little nurse and darling comforter, Nelly. So wrote Miss Chester, with a trembling hand and a full heart.

It was late in the evening of a cold, wet day, that Basil was waiting the arrival of the coach at an office in Piccadilly, when a gaunt, spectral-looking man, miserably clad, and with his hat drawn low over his brow, passed the office door. For a moment Basil was staggered, and could scarcely bring himself to believe that in that miserable object he had beheld his former fellow clerk, Arthur Kemp. The next minute, regardless of the falling rain, he was rapidly following the man.

"Arthur, Arthur!"

The slouching figure turned round at the sound of his name, and stood face to face with his former companion.

He did not attempt to speak.

"Arthur, to think that I should have alighted upon you here! I am glad—and yet so sorry."

"I don't know why you, or any one else, should be glad or sorry either, Mr. Marsden," said the unhappy young man, with a *nonchalance* which was too evidently assumed; "why should *you* be either glad or sorry, Basil?"

"Why have you not let me know of your distress?" Basil began.

"I have not complained of distress, Mr. Marsden," said Kemp, hastily, and in an almost angry tone of defiance.

"I have inquired for you at your old lodgings again and again," Basil went on; "but I could gain no tidings of you."

"Of course you couldn't; I left them long ago."

"But why, why did you not come and see us?—why not, at least, have let me know where you could be found? It was not kind, Arthur."

"What would have been the good of that?" demanded the young man, doggedly: "I didn't want your pity; and you couldn't have helped me, I suppose; you couldn't have washed the black stain off my character, could you? What's the use of talking? You are all right, you know; and I am all wrong, I suppose; that's all;" and he was walking off rapidly, when Basil once more laid his hand upon Arthur's arm.

Basil was shocked by that very touch. Lightly as he grasped Arthur's arm, he could feel how fleshless it was; and the scanty clothing that covered it was soaked like a sponge: the water ran out almost in streams between his fingers. He uttered an exclamation of horror: "My poor friend, you are drenched to the skin: you are ill, too—"

"As well as I ever shall be, Marsden, if that's any comfort; and as to being wet, there's nothing in that, I suppose, such a night as this. You'll be wet through, too, if you stand here much longer; and, as for me, there's one place where I can be wetter still. Let me go."

"Arthur, I cannot, I dare not; there is dreadful meaning in your words," exclaimed Basil, in strong agitation. "Think, Arthur; my dear

Arthur, think! say you only meant to frighten me. You know you have done so before. Think, dear Arthur: all is not lost; think of your father, your mother, your home! Think that you have friends—that you have one, at least, who will help you, as far as in him lies, if you will but be true to yourself. Think, above all things, of the kind and merciful One—"

"Let me go," the unhappy young man repeated, hoarsely.

"Not till you promise—. Oh, Arthur; I can very well understand that you are in want. I know what that is; and you need not be afraid or ashamed to tell me. Tell me how much will be of use to you now; and promise that you will come this evening to the Strand."

At that moment a coach passed by, casting the glare of its lamps on to the wet pavement; and the guard's horn announced that it was close by its stopping place. It was the coach by which Basil's sister and cousin were to arrive.

"I cannot stop longer now," said he hurriedly; "but take this"—he thrust money into Arthur's hand—"and say that you will come presently to the Strand. My cousin and sister are in the coach yonder; and I *must* meet them, or I would not leave you now and here."

"Your sister! Marsden, I say, let me go. I will not be seen by your sister; why do you hold me?"

"It is not Minnie," said Basil; "and you shall not see Minnie if you do not wish; but promise that you will come and see me—only me—this evening."

He listened for a sound, but none came; and as he loosened his grasp, Kemp hastened on; in another moment he was lost in the mist and darkness, and Basil hurried back to the office in time to receive Ellen, who, all smiles and tears and silent rapture, sprang into her brother's arms.

Let us leave Basil to conduct his cousin and sister to his happy home—where, through the evening and till past midnight, he anxiously but vainly expected and watched for the coming of his former fellow clerk—while we trace, as far as could afterwards be traced, the proceedings of that unhappy man on this his last night in the world.

We have said that he hastened away from his friendly persecutor, and was soon lost to sight. The coin which Basil had forced upon him was still in his hand; and no long time passed away before he was standing at a baker's counter, asking, with ill-concealed earnestness, for a penny roll. It was then, probably, that, by the light of the shop, he discovered that the coin was a sovereign, for he was noticed to start as with surprise; and when, after a rigid scrutiny of the piece of money on the part of the baker, he received the change, he thrust it hastily into his pocket, and, with an hysterical laugh, walked hurriedly away.

A short time after this he entered a tavern. So much wretchedness and vice in every shape and form flit from place to place, at all times and seasons, in the streets of great cities, and haunt especially such places of resort, that but little notice was attracted there, by the entrance of a cadaverous, emaciated being, clad in garments

which had once been fashionable and costly, but which now hung loosely upon him, were threadbare, ragged, and dirty, and were evidently soaked with the thick rain which had been falling for hours. And yet it was observed by some there, how ill the poor man looked; how he shivered as he drew near to the fire, and with what a hoarse though eager voice he called for brandy and water, and drank three glasses of the fiery mixture with apparently unquenchable thirst.

Yet later, this same miserable man might have been seen lurking near a house in that neighbourhood, which was too well known to be the resort of gamblers of a low and desperate grade, but which the police of that day had wanted the power or the will to put down. Later still, he might have been seen rushing from its door, with clenched hands, bloodshot eyes, and lips pale and compressed, as with impotent rage.

Near midnight, a watchman or policeman in the Strand took notice of, and suspiciously eyed, this man as he passed over his beat. He thought the man could be up to no good, he afterwards said; for he wandered up and down the pavement, as if he only wanted an opportunity for mischief. The policeman spoke to him, and then he walked away a little distance; but he returned, and loitered about over against a shop (it was Mr. Harebell's) which was shut up, of course, as all the shops were at that hour. But there was a light in the drawing-room above (in Mr. Harebell's lodgers' room), as could be dimly seen glimmering through the thick curtains and window blinds. Once, while the man was at that spot, the curtains were drawn aside; and then the man walked hastily away. But he returned again; and again the policeman spoke to him, and asked him why he was loitering about at that hour, and on such a night? The man uttered some incoherent words, and made towards the door of the house he had been watching. The policeman believed that his hand was at one time on the bell handle, but he did not pull it; and then he walked slowly away, and did not come back.

Arthur Kemp was seen no more that night; and Basil at length, wearied with waiting, and hopeless now that his former companion would keep the appointment, retired to his room, distressed with the remembrance of the chance *rencontre*.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CATASTROPHE.

THE following evening, on his return from the counting-house, Basil was arrested as his feet were on the stairs, by the hand and voice of Mr. Harebell.

"Mr. Basil, excuse my abruptness; but will you—do, if you please, step this way before you go up-stairs. For one minute let me speak to you."

Basil obeyed the summons; and, following Mr. Harebell into his shop, was alarmed by the almost terror-stricken looks of his kind and benevolent landlord.

"My dear Harebell—"

"There is nothing the matter—nothing, at least, here at home. But, oh, Mr. Basil, I have seen a sight to-day that has quite unstrung me."

"What sight, Mr. Harebell? Do speak, my good friend," said Basil, when Mr. Harebell paused, as though reluctant to go on.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Basil. To-day, about noon, a man came to tell me I was wanted at a public-house down by the water side. A body had been dragged up from the water—"

"A body!?"

"A dead body, Mr. Basil; a corpse; a drowned man; and I was wanted to see if I could recognise it."

"But why did they send for you?" Basil asked, fearfully; for the interview of the previous evening flashed across his mind, and he dreaded lest his worst fears should be confirmed.

"Why, it was in this way, Mr. Basil. Some one who had been to look at the dead man was ready to take oath that he had seen that very man last night hanging about our house, and even coming up to the door as if he would have rung the bell; and it was thought—"

"Go on, go on, Mr. Harebell," said Basil, in trembling eagerness; "you saw the man—and knew him?"

"I did, Mr. Basil—I did: it was poor Kemp—Arthur Kemp, about whom you have been in such trouble lately."

"This is terrible," said Basil, in bitter grief—"terrible, Mr. Harebell. I dreaded this; but yet I—Mr. Harebell, I saw poor Kemp last night when I went to Piccadilly, and he hinted at this; but I thought—I hoped I had done something to prevent it. I told him to come here too. Oh, why did I not watch for his coming?"

"Now don't, pray don't blame yourself in that way, Mr. Basil, or I shall never forgive myself for having mentioned it to you—though you would have known it in the end, and in some other way. But I am sure, Mr. Basil, you have no reason to accuse yourself. I know your kind disposition too well not to be sure that you would do all that man could do to save a poor fellow from destruction. It wasn't your fault, Mr. Basil: I am sure of that."

"Do my father and sisters know of this, Mr. Harebell?" Basil asked, when he had regained some degree of composure.

"No; I thought it best, and Mrs. Harebell thought so too, not to say a word about it till you came home."

"That was quite right; don't speak of it—tonight at any rate. I will break it to them. Fathers will be deeply afflicted; for he was always fond of poor Kemp; and Minnie, of course she will be shocked."

"But about the inquest, Mr. Basil: I shall have to go as a witness, and—"

"True; I must also attend. Poor Kemp! poor Arthur! When is the inquest to be held, Mr. Harebell?"

"To-morrow—two o'clock in the afternoon."

It may be supposed that Basil had but little rest that night.

With the evidence which he was able to give the reader is already acquainted; other witnesses deposed to the finding of the body, and others gave additional testimony—though that was not needed—to its identity with Arthur Kemp. Among these was a man at whose house Arthur

had lodged for some weeks past. The witness was not, in appearance, very reputable; and the locality in which he lived was of an indifferent character. He had nothing to say, except that the man had been his lodger; that he came to him pretty nearly empty-handed; and that, what few things he had at first, in the way of clothes, "and so forth," had gone, it might be to get food, or it might be for other purposes—the man could not say. He could only say that his lodger had not appeared to have any kind of employment; that he had been used to be out a good deal at night, and kept in pretty much in the day time; and that—on which the witness laid much stress—he had paid no rent for three weeks, and so had had warning to quit. And he was a poor man himself, witness said, and had a family to keep; and if so be his lodger had been a gentleman, and a friend of the gentleman as was then present (meaning Basil), he didn't think but what that gentleman would make the rent good to him; for he could not afford to lose it.

Being reproved by the coroner for his ill-timed anxiety on this score, and told that it would be necessary to prove that the deceased had no effects at his lodgings, the man sulkily sat down, and other evidence was tendered. It amounted only to this—that the deceased was apparently in a state of great destitution and bodily emaciation; that nothing of value was found on his person—no money, excepting two or three half-pence, and no papers; and that he was found drowned; but whether by his own act, or by the act of others, or by accident, there was nothing to show.

"And, gentlemen of the jury, if you are agreed upon this—"

The gentlemen of the jury were agreed upon this; and the verdict was returned accordingly.

Some of the jury remained behind, to drink and smoke; for it was a broken day, they said. Basil also remained behind, to hold some consultation with the parish authority respecting the funeral of his poor fellow-clerk, and to enter into some negotiations for its decent committal to the grave. He then went home, with a sad heart, to write the dreadful intelligence to poor Arthur's father.

Too late now—too late now, heart-broken man. Weep scalding, blistering tears over that insensible clay; they will not warm the cold cheek, nor melt the obdurate feelings to penitence and prayer. Too late now—all too late, to see and acknowledge, and perhaps to magnify, the errors by which that man now lying there in the rigidity of death—a man now in outward form, but a boy once—and surely a loving, lovely child!—the mistakes, by which he was taught to attach terror to a father's name, and sullen gloom to a religion which speaks peace and love. Too late now—too late, to cry in the bitterness of parental agony—"Oh, if he were but young again!—if he were but a boy again!" Too late now to wish, in that same agony, that in later years a father's eye had more anxiously watched, a father's love been more tenderly shown, a father's hand had been more ready to guide, a father's prayers had been more earnest to lead the wanderer from happiness and rest. Too late now—all too late; too late to call back that stern, unforgiving, reproachful letter—

that last letter your hand ever penned to this your son, your guilty son, but yet your son—that letter which you wrote when another hand than his had conveyed to you the story of his sin and disgrace—that letter which you wrote in the tumult of parental wrath, and which you thought, perchance, could not be too severe, too cutting—that letter in which you called him the disgrace of his family and name, and forbade his return to his home, till fruits meet for repentance had been shown—that letter in which you all but cast him off from your protection and further regards—that letter which was found in his lodgings (not his last) after he had left, and which had since fallen into Basil's hands as the disinterested executor of his poor former companion and fellow-clerk. Oh, father, father, stern father—now bending beneath the weight of woe, and crying out in intensest suffering of soul, that exceeding bitter cry, "Oh, my son Arthur, my son, my son Arthur! Would God I had died for thee, oh, Arthur, my son, my son!" Father, unhappy father, had you nothing but anger and reproach in your heart then?—not one swelling thought of tenderness and compassion for the far-off wanderer?—not one expression at command, to stir up in his not utterly abandoned and reprobate soul, the remembrance of a loving, compassionate, forbearing, forgiving Father in heaven? Alas, no! nothing but anger and reproach then!

Too late now—too late. The tree has fallen; there it lies. Too late! Too late!

And yet not too late for some who, as they read these pages, may be mourning over an unduteous child that still lives; not too late, we say, for such fervently to intercede with Omnipotence to bend the stubborn will, and to melt into contrition the obdurate heart. Not even too late for some unhappy youth, entangled, like him of whom we have just written, in the meshes of sin and temptation, to turn to the strong for strength, and to obtain that grace which shall enable him to escape from the net of the destroyer, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.

THE NEW WATER WEED—SWANS WANTED.

WITHIN the last few years John Bull has become acquainted with the fact that a stranger has taken possession of many of his rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, canals, sluices, and drains, without condescending to ask his permission, or attending to the observances of civility usual in cases of unauthorised intrusion; neither saying, "By your leave, sir," nor, "If you please," but occupying a valuable portion of his domain as a matter of established right. Not only has there been the absence of all ceremony upon the occasion, but the entrance was effected so stealthily, that its precise date and circumstances are not to be accurately defined. For a short time after making the discovery, Mr. Bull thought—opening his eyes, scratching his head, and assuming a diffident, embarrassed air—that he could not before have been thoroughly acquainted with the features of his patrimony, the inmates, so to speak, of his own house. Hence the seeming stranger might all

along have been snugly ensconced in it, and overlooked in the hurly-burly of his affairs. But, the house having been in the same tenancy more than a thousand years, and not being very large, while all sorts of inquirers, after all kinds of things, have gone to and fro, up and down in it, rummaging every nook, corner, and cranny, taking and comparing notes of its contents, the hypothesis was rejected as clearly untenable. Recognition must inevitably have occurred sooner had there been any long establishment. There was no alternative, therefore, but to admit the fact of recent intrusion, and to propose the natural interrogatives relative to the intruder—Who are you? Where do you come from? How did you get here? What are you about? Do you mean to stay or go? All which questions, and sundry others, we will endeavour briefly to answer, as the object of these queries has no speech or language.

The stranger, then, is the *Anacharis Alsinastrum*—so called by Mr. Babington of Cambridge, in the year 1848—a name which, if translated by good dame Partington, might possibly be turned into Anna Harris and her nostrums. It designates a plant of the aquatic class, which has many extraordinary properties, and has caused in certain quarters no little consternation. Boatmen and bargemen—good common-sense observers—early distinguished it as a “furreigner,” and spoke of its “fixin” in the canals as a nuisance, calling it “water thyme,” from a faint general resemblance which it bears to that plant. It is so unlike any of our other water-plants as to be easily recognised. The colour is a deep green. The leaves are about half an inch long, by an eighth wide, egg-shaped at the point, and beset with minute teeth, which cause them to cling. They grow in *threes* round a slender stringy stem, so very brittle, that whenever the plant is disturbed, fragments are broken off. Dense tangled masses of considerable extent are formed, which seem originally to spring from the two sides and bottom of the water-course, meeting at length in the middle, and filling it up. The specific gravity is so nearly that of water, that when cut, the masses do not float at the surface like other weeds, but are submerged, and may be seen either at or near the bottom, rolling over like woolpacks in a clear space, but otherwise clinging to everything they meet with, hugging the piers of bridges, accumulating at locks, and grounding in shoal water. The plant is *diaceous*, that is, it produces male and female flowers upon separate individuals. But all the specimens hitherto found in this country have been of one sex only, *females*. Its powers of increase are prodigious. Every fragment is capable of becoming an independent plant, furnished with roots and stems, extending itself indefinitely in all directions. Most of our aquatics require, as indispensable to their growth, to be rooted in the bottom or sides of the river, drain, or pond in which they luxuriate. But the *Anacharis* is altogether independent of this condition. You may separate it from the soil by cutting; but it defies that ordinarily death-dealing process. It still grows when cut, and thrives as it travels with the stream. So much for the first question—*who or what is the intruder?*

The weed was first formally noticed on the 3rd

of August, 1842, by Dr. George Johnson of Berwick-on-Tweed, as growing in the lake of Dunse castle, which communicates with the Tweed by the Whiteadder river. The discovery excited no interest, and scarcely attracted any attention. In fact, Mr. Bull hardly thought it worth while to bestow a *pooch, pooch* upon the matter, being just then in high perturbation about a step relating to his corn-fields, which thousands declared would ruin them for ever, and as many thousands affirmed the contrary. The old gentleman had quite forgotten the circumstance, when, five years afterwards, the weed turned up in another quarter; and he speedily learnt that it was here, there, and almost everywhere in the very heart of his property, the midland counties of England.

In the autumn of 1847, the *Anacharis* was discovered by Miss Kirby of Lubbenham-lodge, in reservoirs adjoining the Foxton locks, on the canal near Market Harborough in *Leicestershire*. The specimens were in considerable abundance, growing closely matted together. In the autumn of 1848, Dr. Johnson, the original discoverer, observed the plant in two stations in the Whiteadder river, to which it had extended from the loch of Dunse, while that lake was nearly choked with it. Later in the same season, it was recognised in *Nottinghamshire*, in the Lene, a tributary of the Trent; and still later, in *Northamptonshire*, in the Watsford locks, on the same line of canal as the Foxton reservoirs. In August, 1849, it was noticed in *Derbyshire* and *Staffordshire*, growing in profusion in the Trent near Burton, and also in the canal there, forming very large submerged masses of a striking appearance. About Christmas, 1850, it was found in *Warwickshire*, near Rugby. In 1851, it was in the Oxford canal, near Wyken colliery, and in the river of Ely. In 1852, it might be seen almost anywhere in the upper portions of the Cam, the Ouse, and the drains of the Fen country.

There is reason to believe that the plant was in the neighbourhood of Rugby, which includes the Foxton reservoirs and the Watsford locks, long before public attention was called to the subject; for boatmen and lockmen spoke of it as a well-known troublesome customer, an acquaintance of some years' standing. In all probability, also, the locality named may be regarded as the centre from which it originally radiated. The Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and Nottinghamshire stations are in direct water communication with it, while the district is geographically calculated to serve the purpose of widely diffusing a botanical product, being near the centre of England, a part of its highest table-land, and close to the line of watershed which separates several great river systems. Within the area of a few miles, the natural drainage is carried off in opposite directions; westward, by the Avon to the Severn; southward, by the Cherwell to the Thames; eastward, by the Nen and Welland to the Wash; and northward, by the Soar to the Trent and Humber. A few detached sprigs established in the head-streams would soon spread the inoculation far and wide, extending it to the connected channels; and when first noticed in the midland counties, the plant was evidently descending the rivers, their lower courses being

quite free from it. How it got to the lock of Dunse is unknown, but would doubtless resolve itself into one of those simple incidents by which plants are introduced to new sites, often overleaping, as they do, a considerable extent of intermediate country. How it reached the Cam has been thus explained. In 1837, a specimen from the Foxton reservoirs was planted in a tub in the Cambridge botanical garden. In the following year, the curator placed a piece of it in the conduit stream that passes by the new garden. After spreading all over this site, it seems to have bolted through the waste pipe, across the Trumpington road, into the Vicar's brook, and from thence into the river, where it was soon conspicuous.

Upon learning that an interloper, of foreign aspect, has taken possession of some of our tenements, and is making himself comfortable in them, playing pranks, and defying ejection, Whence comes the fellow? How did he get in? are questions naturally asked. We can only reply somewhat doubtfully or hypothetically, in the case of the *Anacharis*. Plants of this genus are native to the American continent. One species, called *Anacharis Nuttali*, or *Udora Canadensis*, very closely resembling our intruder, if not identical with it, is frequent in the rivers from Canada to Virginia. It is true that, in its transatlantic home, the plant does not display the astonishing activity which distinguishes it in our own waters. But this may be owing to the circumstance of the more sluggish character of our streams, and the different ingredients with which they are impregnated, favouring its development. At any rate, it is clear that, whether an importation from America or some other country, the new comer finds food abundant and stimulating in its fresh quarters, and has no intention to leave voluntarily such agreeable premises as those of Mr. Bull. Its riotous activity at present is, by the way, an argument against its being indigenous. If a native of England, the fact is utterly inexplicable that it never exhibited its extraordinary powers of increase before; for the supposition of some new property having recently been imported to it, or to the water-courses, is plainly inadmissible. If from North America, how did it get to our midland counties? Botanists have transported the forms of vegetable life thousands of miles from their natural location, and established them permanently in their own neighbourhood, attracted by their value, beauty, or curious structure. Emigrants have done this, simply in order to have memorials of the land of their fathers in their new destination. In this way, Scotchmen introduced the thistle into South Australia, which proved such a congenial site that the plant became a pest and provoked a colonial war against it. But the hypothesis of the *Anacharis* having been intentionally introduced is not supported by either evidence or probability. The conjecture has been hazarded, and it is plausible, that the foreign weed came with foreign timber to the neighbourhood of Rugby, during the execution of the numerous railways which meet at that point. In Canada, the timber being floated in rafts down the rivers, it is easy to conceive of fragments of the weed clinging to it, or seeds finding their way into clefts of the wood; and if but one fragment or one seed retained its

vitality in some moist cranny, till it reached our shores, it sufficiently accounts for the myriads of individuals that now exist around us. The hypothesis of propagation from a single seed or fragment, rather than from a number of either, is supported by the fact of all the plants in England being of one sex. If this theory be correct, what is receiving continual illustrations—the great results for good or evil that may spring from a trifling cause.

An intruder may prove an acquisition by useful services and agreeable manners; or his harmlessness may reconcile us to the intrusion. But none of these qualities belong to the botanical settler. The foreigner is as impertinent, meddlesome, mischievous vagrant and greedy an inmate as ever man had to deal with, caring for nothing but his own accommodation; and so far from being satisfied with occupying space after space, that every fresh expansion, like the ambition of the late emperor Nicholas, has stimulated the desire to expand. The temper of Mr. Bull has been not a little tried by the annoying behaviour of his visitor. Though a tolerant, good-natured man upon the whole, there are notoriously bounds to his patience; and not a few stormy explosions have been provoked by the *Anacharis* offering serious obstacles to one of his industrial pursuits, and to some of his favourite pastimes. Watermen complain of the obstructed state of the canals and rivers owing to the weed, which impedes their navigation, and renders the work of horses and men more laborious in getting the boats along. It is necessary, therefore, to perform the troublesome operation of clearing out more frequently than formerly. At Burton-on-Trent, one of the two branches into which the river there divides has been almost entirely blocked up. Its navigation, lower down, in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, was altogether arrested for a time in the autumn of 1854, owing to the conjoint circumstances of abundant weed and shoal water. At one point, a miniature fleet of from two to three hundred barges collected, the lines, cables, and ropes of which formed a complete web of hemp, while impatient captains and crews, trying their utmost to get along, and spectators, amused with the entanglement, made the banks uproarious. Sluice-keepers declare that masses of the plant impede the working of locks. Rowers on the Cam find that it has circumscribed their space. Swimmers assert that it clings to them like scratch-weed, and that, if entangled, they are in danger of being drawn under water. Fishermen state that they can no longer ply their nets as formerly, and have given up the attempt in some of their old haunts. Lastly, to close this formidable bill of indictment against the *Anacharis*, it has affected the drainage of the Fen country, an evil in that district comparable to derangement in the ventilation of a mine.

It is ordinarily possible to get rid of an intruder by showing him the cold shoulder, or by forcible ejection. But the new water-weed is not a susceptible plant, and, having once got in among us, it has manifested a firm determination to remain. Though cut and treated as mercilessly as savages have been dealt with, it defies that mode of extermination, and will doubtless give us its company

as long as the older vegetation which flourished in the land in Roman and Celtic times. Happily, just when there seemed no prospect of even keeping it down, and setting bounds to its annoyance, a method of doing this was discovered. Mr. Bull has swans upon his estate; and two or three centuries ago, he was a large proprietor of the bird, commonly deemed as useless as it is graceful. But mortals have aforetime had to change long established opinions, and must now do so with reference to the uselessness of swans. It has been mentioned that in 1847 the loch of Dunse was full of weed. It then required the greatest exertion to row a boat across it. There were at that time a few swans upon the lake. Whether vexed with the intruder for occupying so large a portion of their ancient domain, and interfering with pleasant locomotion, or short of ordinary food, we know not; but certain it is that they attacked the plant, and from that moment its doom was sealed in the locality. They not only liked it as an occasional relish, but lived entirely upon it; and when the lake was thinned, they followed it down the small burns leading into the Whiteadder river. The swans themselves thrived upon the diet, and increased in an unusual manner. In 1848, one pair of birds raised a brood of seven cygnets; three pairs raised broods of five each; and several pair reared respectively three and two young. In little more than four years the loch was free, or nearly so, from every trace of the aquatic vegetable. But as there is seldom a good in this world without its alloy, the swans began to pine away and die upon their diet being used up; and in spite of every effort of the owner to save them, they have since dwindled down to the original number.

There is clearly, therefore, a remedy at hand of very easy appliance for the botanical pest. England was once the country of swans. The parks of the nobles and gentry have them still. A few linger on some of the rivers, as the Thames and Isis, where they are preserved as relics of former times—historic birds, like the eagles of Geneva, and the pigeons of Geneva. On the Thames they are royal property, and it is felony to steal their eggs. Occasionally some of the more enterprising descend the stream to the metropolis, and may be seen cruising off Blackfriars-bridge, seldom or never, we believe, venturing below it. But in days gone by, the river had immense flocks. "Never," says the duke of Najara's secretary, recording his visit to Henry VIII, "did I see a river so thickly covered with swans as this." Paul Jovius remarked, that these birds in groups greeted the arriving fleets; some of cardinal Pole's suite describes the view of the stream above bridge as a vast mass of silver, from the abundance of swans, as far as the eye could reach. But there was then scarcely a watercourse of any extent in the kingdom to which the words might not be applied:—

"The stately sailing swan
Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale,
And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier isle,
Protective of his young."

Abbotsbury, the present seat of the earl of Ilchester, had, prior to the dissolution of the monas-

teries, a swannery which generally consisted of more than a thousand individuals. The lord abbot had doubtless many a cygnet at his table when flesh-meat was forbidden. It only remains, therefore, for the English waters to resume in some measure their ancient aspect, in order to free them from, or effectually to keep in check, the *Anacharis Alsinastrum*. Since this discovery, Mr. Bull has recovered his equanimity.

THE MADRAS TAILOR.

AMONGST the ladies in the Madras presidency, an invaluable individual is the Madras tirzee, or tailor, especially if the said ladies happen to be stationed some hundred miles up the country, far away from the *beau monde* and the fashions; for a rage for dress prevails in India, as well as elsewhere. It is not only the lady of the greatest man in the opulent city of Madras that must needs, despite heat and mosquitoes, ill-health and sallow complexion, flaunt about with all the frivolity of a butterfly, to be admired superficially, as far as the texture and make of dress is concerned, by a legion of sycophants who heartily despise the wearer; but even the wife of the junior ensign in the 175th native infantry, who was a boarding-school miss only eighteen months ago—even she, poor lady, though absent from the hum and gaiety of cities and towns, and exiled for six long months with her husband (who is on detachment duty) at a place three hundred miles away from the nearest European station—must follow the fashion; and to enable her to do this, having baby and household duties to attend to, she is compelled, so she says, to attach to her personal staff and retinue a monthly salaried tirzee, as he is called; at which compulsion her husband groans, when obliged to set aside, each month, 30 out of 170 rupees, for the stipend of this indispensable appendage.

Ensign Nobbles—for such is his name—is on detachment duty at a place called Currypoorham, situated in the very heart of that densest Indian jungle, to wit, the Wynard; and his duties there are supposed to be the protection of lives and property, and especially treasury escorts passing to and fro from the sea coast to the interior. In reality, his occupations are not over-arduous; they might be summed up upon the four fingers and thumb of either hand, consisting, as they do, in reading, riding, shooting, eating, and sleeping. His greatest delight is the arrival of the tappal or postman; while his greatest horror is the tirzee in question, whom he looks upon secretly in the light of an intruder and impostor—an aider and abetter in his wife's extravagance; yet he dares not venture to even hint at such a thing, for his thoughtless spouse would almost faint at his cruelty, and, rummaging up old drawers, present him, may, scare him, with quarterly bills for cigars and other unnecessary luxuries, which Nobbles is sorry to confess very nearly counterbalance the monthly stipend of the tirzee.

Such being the case, our tailor is duly and without opposition installed in his office, and is looked upon as part and portion of the ensign's



THE MADRAS TAILOR.

furniture and family. Seid Mahomed—for so the ensign's tailor styles himself—is a meagre, careworn looking individual, who was once an orderly in an infantry regiment, where he could never get further than what is termed the goose-step. At that period, he was accustomed to have more stripes upon his back (witness the drill-sergeant) than he wears now as a mark of caste upon his forehead, though the latter are many and variegated—for our firzee professes to be of very high caste. Having been turned out of the army as a hopeless candidate for military honours, the colonel's lady had taken compassion upon the boy, and employed him in her own establishment as deputy sub-assistant firzee to the three celebrated firzees whom that lady kept. Under such favourable auspices, and aided by the pice (copper money) that the colonel's lady bestowed upon him, Seid Mahomed gradually ascended the ladder of life. It is true he had once or twice slipped, and grazed his shins by falling into the dishonest practice of abstracting some of the cloth intrusted to him; but he had been flogged and imprisoned

out of this practice; and, according to his own statement, which we would not place too much confidence in, he had become as honest as refined gold.

Step by step, then, our firzee has risen, till at length he has actually commenced life as a master tailor himself; but it being his first trial, he is fain to content himself with thirty rupees a month, whereas the captain's lady pays fifty, and the colonel's one hundred and twenty.

Seid Mahomed, though attached to the suite and retinue of the ensign commanding the detachment, is of too high caste to eat or sleep within the same house as his master; besides which, he carries his wife and children about with him, and they also are of too high caste to be contaminated by being brought into contact with the other pariahs in the ensign's service. He comes at ten A.M., works till twelve, then gets up and goes under a favourite banyan tree not a hundred yards from the ensign's house, where his wife has brought his mid-day meal, and an ewer of Ganges water to perform his ablutions with; the said

Ganges water, although the tirzee denies the statement, having been drawn overnight from a well just behind the hut where he lives.

Our tirzee is no Brahmin : fowl, curry, and rice, form his favourite dinner, cooked with a floating capital of ghee ; and half a bunch of plantains completes his repast. Perhaps he has only occupied ten minutes at his dinner ; what of that ? every tirzee is allowed an hour in the middle of the day ; and so, as he can neither read nor write, nor comprehend the beauties of nature, nor talk politics nor domestic economy with his wife, he composes himself for a nap ; and the anxious partner of his joys and sorrows fans him the while with a large palm leaf fan, keeping watch over him lest a scorpion should creep into his shoes, or a centipede into his ear, or a cobra drop from the tree above, and compose itself to sleep on his breast.

By and by a shouting for the tirzee compels the wife to waken the husband, which she does by pouring cold water over his nose. Up starts the tirzee, rubs his eyes, washes his face, and then crawls back to his master's bungalow. Bee-bee-sahib (the lady) is very angry indeed that the tirzee should stop away so long, when there is baby's new frock to be finished ; but as this is an every-day song, the tirzee squats himself down cross-kneed, and fixing a pair of glasses on the very furthest extremity of his nose, he takes up the half-finished frock and proceeds to make twenty or a dozen stitches more.

Our ensign and his lady have just had their tiffin (lunch), and, as is their daily practice during the greater heat of the day, they indulge in the eastern siesta. The armor (wet nurse) carries baby into the verandah, so that his prattling or squabbling should not interfere with the repose of his parents ; and this is the general signal for all the servants in the establishment, who amount to somewhere about twenty individuals, to assemble where the tailor is seated at work, and indulge in converse sweet, whispering anecdotes one to another, most of which have reference to their master or mistress, and nearly choking themselves in their efforts to suppress laughter. So much for the gratitude of human nature in general.

In the midst of tittering and mirth, a sudden spectre scatters the idlers in all directions. Our friend the ensign, who has more than half a suspicion of what is going on, with shoeless feet, and a slipper in either hand, appears at the further end of the verandah. The most garrulous of the group has a sudden stop put to his eloquence by a slipper coming into violent contact with his person. Immediately the armor occupies herself in nursing baby, and the matz and the massalgee, with the grooms, vanish through doors and windows and over verandah balustrades, while the tirzee, like the personification of industry and perseverance, makes twenty stitches, where, under ordinary circumstances, he would only make five, and has actually the audacity to expostulate with his master upon the impropriety of throwing slippers and gambolling with the servants. Suppose it had hit Seid Mahomed on the head, or grazed his nose, or knocked off his turban. Why, the results would have been serious. Barely a week's purification could have absolved him from the dreadful

contamination, and he might even have lost caste for ever.

Mrs. Nobbles comes to the rescue of her tirzee ; but she must confess that baby's frock has not made much progress since tiffin time. However, in her own mind she has not the slightest doubt but that it is all owing to those other tiresome servants. To remedy this, therefore, she fetches her own work-box, and, drawing an easy chair to where she can watch the tirzee's progress, the bee-bee-sahib does a little fancywork for baby's cap ; and the tirzee, who now considers himself a very ill-used man, grumbles and works, and works and grumbles again, till at last, when five o'clock arrives, and he gathers together pins and needles, and such like odds and ends, prior to his taking his *conge* for the day, he discovers, to his astonishment, that, under the influence of the lady's eye, he has accomplished more work in two hours than he usually achieves in a day.

The lady also is highly gratified at what work the tirzee has done ; so she compliments him on his progress, and, as a mark of confidence in his rising abilities, proposes that on the morrow he shall cut out and make a new shooting-jacket for his master—a feat in tailoring which few native tirzees have ever accomplished. Seid Mahomed struts home with fresh dignity and importance, while, about the same hour, Mr. and Mrs. Nobbles in a cabriolet, and the armor and baby in a tonjon, go forth to take their evening drive, which extends over a desolate country, and round a terrible hill, notorious as the resort of tigers and many other fierce denizens of the jungle. To see Mrs. Nobbles' bonnet and feathers, and her fashionably cut Palmerino dress (made by Seid Mahomed, and which certainly cannot boast of much in the way of a fit), one might also imagine that she expected to meet the governor-general of India, or some of his deputies, whereas the only being she is at all likely to encounter is a wild elephant or a tiger, a group of chattering monkeys or a hideous laughing hyena. The ensign sighs to think of all this, as he pulls out his cigar case ; but somehow or other this very action, like a magician's wand, calls up before him the dreadful array of bills already alluded to by Mr. Nobbles, and so he is content to swallow his emotion with the vile tobacco-smoke, which he would have one believe he only uses to keep away or counteract the noxious effects of the jungle vapour. Such is the way in which men, ay, and women too, tax themselves with their own extravagancies and follies.

Next morning the tirzee is at his post rather earlier than usual ; his mat is spread, his largest pair of scissors sharpened, his old foot-rule fresh hinged, while he sits upon the thorns of expectation and impatience, till at last the lady of the house makes her appearance, carrying in one hand the stuff to be metamorphosed by tailoring skill into a coat, and in the other what has been metamorphosed, by time and wear, from a coat into a shapeless heap of rags.

Up starts the tailor, and, seizing upon one end of the cloth, his first operation is to measure the whole piece, so as to calculate the probable use that can be made of any surplus quantity, or, may be, just to estimate what quantity might be

appropriated to private purposes in his own family, without being missed or asked after. Hindoo dishonesty is well known, and we have not, alas! to travel far from our own shores to find examples of similar laxity of principle.

In measuring operations, the marks of caste, drawn down our tirzee's forehead in all colours of the rainbow, and which concentrate just above the nose, are of invaluable service to Seid Mahomed. Thus, for instance, if the breadth of the shoulders be twenty-eight inches, he, in lieu of writing it down, or making a little slit in the cloth with his scissors, holds it up to his forehead and marks it with the red stripe there painted; the length he marks by the yellow stripe; the cuffs by the green, and so on throughout the whole coat: so that he can tell by the different colours marked what each separate portion is to be allotted to.

Oh, but it is a tedious job the making of that shooting-coat! What with unpicking sleeves, and letting out here, and tacking in there, and putting in linings wrongside outermost, nearly a month is swallowed up in its completion; and then, as our ensign growlingly remarks, if he had taken an ordinary sack and cut three holes in it, one for his head and two for his arms, upon the whole it would have proved nearly as good a fit, without pinching and squeezing him so uncomfortably about the armpits.

No, decidedly, our tirzee is not destined to flourish as a military tailor; he never had, and never will have, an eye for fitting; but his great forte lies in mending old linen, putting on buttons, neatly darning up holes, and making long loose robes for babies and younger children.

Now, as Mr. Nobbles says in confidence to his friend captain Sabre, "Where is the use of an English wife if she does not carry with her everywhere those useful household accomplishments which so distinguish our countrywomen at home, and make them such admirable housewives?" Young ladies, do you hear that?

But besides the genus tirzee, to which Seid Mahomed belongs, there is a class of native tailors in India who work exclusively upon muslin; these bring their work to a high state of perfection, and nothing in that line can be more exquisite than the flowers, and fruits, and other open work, which they expose for sale in the bazaars at Madras.

INTRODUCTORY LESSONS ON MORALS.

THE science of moral philosophy, dealing although it does with some of the highest questions that can affect human happiness, and abounding in attractive matter, is yet associated in many minds with ideas of dryness and abstruseness. The didactic and uninviting language in which some writers have couched their speculations upon ethics may possibly have tended to foster such unfavourable impressions; but all who have followed Paley in his lively and luminous expositions of morals will not require to be told that there is a way of investing such topics with life and interest. The author whom we have just named has, unhappily,

however, erred in the fundamental principle upon which his philosophy rests; and a good elementary treatise upon a subject that forms an essential part of a complete education is therefore still a *desideratum*. In the following lessons, an attempt is accordingly made to supply this want, by the pen of a writer of eminence and distinguished ability, whose treatises on cognate subjects* have already met with a large measure of public acceptance. We commend the series of papers to the thoughtful attention of our readers.

LESSON I.—CONSCIENCE.

§ 1. *The Law of the Land no complete Standard.*

It was remarked in the last of the "Lessons on the British Constitution," that the law of the land ought not to be made our standard of moral right and wrong. It is indeed our duty to obey the laws, unless there should be a law commanding us to do something absolutely wrong; but this is only a part of our duty, and not the whole. For there are many things to which a good man will think himself morally bound, though they are what no laws make any mention of; such as gratitude to a benefactor, charity to the poor, and many others. Such duties cannot be enjoined by any human laws, because they are what cannot be *enforced*; being in their own nature voluntary. When a man is compelled to make repayment to one who has advanced him money, or to contribute to the support of the poor, there is no gratitude or charity in the case. For these consist in *giving* of one's own free will; and no one can be said to *give* what the law obliges him to *pay*. If therefore any one should have been well inclined to contribute a certain sum towards the relief of his poor neighbours, still, as soon as the law obliges him to contribute that sum, it is no gift; because what the law requires him to part with is no longer his own.

So also, there are many things which every good man would consider wrong, but which the law does not prohibit, because it could not prevent them, or because the attempt to prevent them would do more harm than good. What were called "sumptuary laws" have been, for this reason, abolished in most civilised countries. For though it is wrong for a man to spend more than he can properly afford, in fine clothes, furniture, and feasts, beyond his station, the attempt to prevent this by legal interference with each man's private expenditure, has always been found to be intolerably troublesome and almost entirely ineffectual.

§ 2. *The Law does not control Motives.*

But even if it were possible for the laws to enjoin everything that is good, and prohibit everything that is wrong, still a man who should act rightly merely in obedience to the laws, and for the sake of avoiding legal penalties, would not be at all what any one would account a good man, because he would not be acting from a virtuous

* "Introductory Lessons on the British Constitution;" "Easy Lessons on Reasoning;" "Easy Lessons on Money Matters." London: J. W. Parker.

motive; and it is entirely on the motives and disposition of the mind that the *moral* character of any one's conduct depends. An action, indeed, which is done from a bad or from an inferior motive, may be in itself right, as being what a good man would be disposed to do; as when a man pays his debts for fear of being imprisoned or having his goods seized; but this does not make him an honest man.

You can plainly see, therefore, how great an error it would be for a man to make the law of the land his standard of right and wrong, and to be satisfied with himself as long as he did but comply with the laws. For, in the first place, he might do much that is wrong, and might omit many duties, without transgressing any law; and secondly, when he did do what is right in itself, yet not *because* it is right, but merely for fear of legal penalties, though this would be a benefit to the public, it would be no virtue in *him*.

§ 3. All Men have some notion of Right and Wrong.

All men, except perhaps some few of the wildest savages, have some notion of moral right and wrong, independently of human laws. There is hardly any one who would not account it a good thing to relieve a distressed neighbour, and a bad thing to treat a benefactor with ingratitude; though these are matters which laws do not notice. And every one would allow that whoever has borrowed any thing, is bound in duty to repay it, even though there were no law to compel him to do so.

But there are several points in which different nations, and different persons, vary considerably as to their notions of what is morally good and bad. The same things which are condemned by some, are approved by others. And this has led some persons to doubt whether there is any such faculty in the human mind as that which is commonly called "conscience," or "moral sense," or "moral faculty." But you should remember that every one of our faculties is capable of cultivation and improvement, and is also liable to be corrupted and depraved, and is subject to various imperfections. Human reason is far from being infallible; for many men are deceived by fallacious arguments, and fall into various errors; and there are great varieties in the opinions formed by different persons. Yet no one would on that ground deny that man is a rational being. And again, you may occasionally see great variations even in the bodily senses, and in the bodily formation of different individuals. But we do not consider these variations as doing away with all general rules. Some are born idiots, and some blind; some have been born with only one arm, and some with neither arms nor legs. Yet we speak of man as a being possessing reason, and having eyes, and arms, and legs. And again, to a person in fever, sweet things taste bitter; and some have a taste so depraved by disease or by habit as to prefer bitter or sour things to sweet. Yet no one would deny that wormwood is bitter, and honey sweet; or would say that aloes has naturally a pleasanter taste than honey. And it would be equally absurd to deny that there is anything naturally odious in ingratitude, or that

justice and beneficence are natural and proper objects of approbation.

§ 4. Scripture does not profess to give precise Rules for Conduct in all cases.

Some, however, may be disposed to think that it is of no consequence to Christians what may be the natural faculties of man in all that relates to moral conduct, or what may have been said or thought on the subject by heathens; since we have in the Holy Scriptures a sufficient guide to teach us all that we are to do or avoid. But this would be to mistake altogether the whole character of our Scriptures. You may see, even from Scripture itself, that it was never designed to supply a complete set of precise rules as to every part of our conduct; and that the sacred writers do not address themselves as to men that had no natural notion of moral right and wrong. They do indeed notice such errors in particular points as their hearers were the most apt to fall into, and they dwell on such particular duties as had been most neglected. But they do not attempt to go through in detail all things that a Christian is required to do or to abstain from. And they are so far from supposing their hearers to require to be taught the first rudiments of morality—the fundamental distinction between moral good and evil—that, on the contrary, they appeal to the moral principles of their people, and call upon them to judge and decide according to those principles. And they appeal to them not only as Christians, but as *human* creatures; for they speak of the Gentiles before the gospel had been revealed to them, as "knowing" (when they lived in gross vice) "that they who do such things are worthy of death," and they speak of some who "not having the [divine] law, do, by nature, the things of the law; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. ii. 14.)

§ 5. Scripture addresses Men as possessing a Conscience.

Moreover, our Lord says that "the servant who knew not his lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; but that he who knew his lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." Now, that one who knew his lord's will, and did it not, should receive the heavier punishment, is a rule which one can easily understand; but that one "who knew not his lord's will," that is, who had not received any express command, could "commit things worthy of stripes," would be utterly inconceivable, if we supposed all notions of right and wrong to have been originally derived entirely from a knowledge of the divine will.

And again, when the apostles exhort Christians to think on and practise "*whatsoever* things are pure, whatsoever things are honest and lovely, and of good report;" and "*giving* all diligence, to add to their faith virtue, and temperance, and patience," and the like; it is plain they could not have been speaking to men who had no notion of what is meant by virtue and temperance and purity, etc., and who needed to be taught precisely what is to be accounted good and bad conduct on each point; just as you would inform a blind man

that snow is white, and grass green, and coal black, and the like.

Indeed, the ancient heathen philosophers, who had no belief in a future state of reward and punishment, or in any revelation made to man, used the words which we translate "virtue," and gave, on the whole, much the same descriptions of virtue and vice that any one would do now. And this would evidently have been impossible, if man had been naturally quite destitute of all moral faculty.

§ 6. Moral Goodness attributed to God.

Moreover, the sacred writers always speak of God as *just* and *good*, and his commands as *right* and *reasonable*. "Are not my ways," says he by a prophet, "equal? Are not your ways unequal?" And again, "Why, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Now all this would have been quite unmeaning, if man had no idea of what is good or bad in itself, and meant by those words merely what is *commanded* or *forbidden* by God. For then, to say that God's commands are *just* and *good*, would be only saying that his commands are his commands. If man had not been originally endowed by his Maker with any power of distinguishing between moral good and evil, or with any preference of the one to the other, then it would be mere trifling to speak of the divine *goodness*; since it would be merely saying that "God is what he is," which is no more than might be said of any being in the universe.

Whenever, therefore, you hear any one speaking of our having derived all our notions of morality from the will of God, the sense in which you must understand him is, that it was God's will to create man a being endowed with conscience, and capable of perceiving the difference of right and wrong, and of understanding that there is such a thing as duty. And if any one should use expressions which do not seem to mean this, but to imply that there is no such thing as natural conscience—no idea in the human mind of such a thing as duty—still you may easily prove that his real meaning must be what we have said. If any persons tell you that our first notion of right and wrong is entirely derived from the divine law, and that those words have no meaning except obedience and disobedience to the declared will of God, you may ask them whether it is a matter of *duty* to obey God's will, or merely a matter of *prudence*, inasmuch as He is able to punish those who rebel against him? Whether they think that God is *justly entitled* to obedience, or merely that it would be *rash* to disobey one who has power to enforce his commands?

They will doubtless answer, that we *ought* to obey the divine commands as a point of duty, and not merely on the ground of expediency—that God is not only powerful, but good—and that conformity to his will is a thing right in itself, and should be practised, not through mere fear of punishment, or hope of reward, but *because* it is *right*.

§ 7. Obedience to the Divine Will is a Duty.

Now this proves that they must be sensible that there is in the human mind some notion of such a thing as duty, and of things being right or

wrong in their own nature. For, when any persons submit to the will of another merely because it is their interest, or because they dare not resist, we never speak of this submission as a matter of *duty*, but merely of prudence. If robbers were to seize you and carry you off as a slave, threatening you with death if you offered to resist or to escape, you might think it *advisable* to submit, if you saw that resistance would be hopeless; but you would not think yourself bound in duty to do so. Or again, if you were offered good wages for doing some laborious work, you might think it *expedient* to accept the offer, but you would not account it a moral duty. And when a farmer supplies his cattle, or a slave-owner his slaves, with abundance of the best food, in order that they may be in good condition, and do the more work for himself, or fetch a better price, and not from benevolence to them, every one would regard this as mere *prudence*, and not *virtue*. And we judge the same in every case where a man is acting solely with a view to his own advantage.

You can easily prove, therefore, that when people speak of a knowledge of the divine will being the origin of all our moral notions, they cannot mean exactly what the words would seem to signify; if, at least, they admit at the same time that it is a matter of *duty*, and not merely of prudence, to obey God's will, and that He has a just claim to our obedience.

THE FEAST OF FLOWERS.

It is the month of May—that loveliest of months, when nature resumes her holiday robes, when magical life starts forth on every side, and the joyous birds send their notes of thanksgiving to the skies. The breath of the Creator has passed, as it were, over the earth, and the world is resuscitated as from the sleep of the grave. Who has not felt his heart thrill with emotions of gladness and gratitude at this blest revival, this outpouring of life and vigour, this anticipatory fulfilment of the promise, that, "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, day and night, summer and winter, shall not cease." The very leaves seem to tremble with joyousness in their new being, while the gentle breeze, kissing their fair forms, passes on to whisper in harmony with the rippling waters of the brook.

It is the month of May, and the florists of our land have collected together to spread before our delighted gaze a feast of some of the loveliest of the Creator's gifts to man. Whilst contemplating their beauties, how many a heart is teeming with silent and grateful adoration of Him who pencilled those delicate tints, who gave those varied and graceful forms, who lent that sweet fragrance! Ah! who can then help exclaiming, with our immortal poet—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty; Thine this universal frame, thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then! unspeakable!"

Most of those whose eyes may glance over this page have probably been present at one or more of these horticultural fêtes; it is, therefore, unnecessary to enter into any description of the gay

and brilliant scene : but there is another to which we would now advert, and of which, perhaps, few, comparatively speaking, may have ever before heard—we mean the feast of flowers of the Thibetan Llamas of Kounboum. These flowers are not the produce of the genial summer months, nor do they start into being at the bidding of nature. No ; they are the work of man's hand, and are brought forth in the chill, icy bosom of dreary winter. What, then, is the material employed in their composition ? Rice paper, painted muslin, or feathers, of which such exquisite *bouquets* excited our admiration and astonishment at the great exhibition of 1851 ? No, something more fragile far, and, to our ideas, far less calculated for the purpose. This material is nothing more nor less than—fresh butter !

The festival is held on the 15th day of the first month of the year, and is attended by thousands of pilgrims, not only from all parts of Thibet, but even from the most distant Tartar regions. Three months are employed in preparing for this singular and beautiful exhibition, of which the following description, drawn from Hue's Travels through Tartary, Thibet, etc., cannot fail to be deeply interesting.

Behold, then, twenty Llamas, selected for their artistic talents, occupied in kneading and working up enormous heaps of fresh butter, and even during the severity of a Tartar winter, plunging their hands continually in cold water to prevent the heat of their fingers injuring the delicate work. When thoroughly kneaded and prepared, this butter, without any admixture of extraneous matter, is moulded into representations of various Asiatic nations in their different costumes, landscapes, subjects taken from the history of Buddhism, etc. The flowers, as they are styled, are formed into colossal bas-reliefs, framed in with animals, birds, and flowers, all of the same plastic material. When the models are prepared and ready, they are passed over to another set of artists, who put the finishing stroke to the work, by colouring them in an exquisite manner, giving to the whole an almost perfect resemblance of nature.

The author to whom we are indebted for these interesting details says, in describing these flowers :—“ The figures were animated, the attitudes natural, the costumes easy and graceful, and at the first glance you could readily distinguish the kind and quality of the texture meant to be represented. The skins of the sheep, tiger, wolf, and other animals, were so well executed, that one was tempted to touch them with the hand to assure one's-self that they were not real.”

On the evening of the fête-day the flowers are placed on light scaffoldings before the Buddhist temples ; vases of red and yellow copper are interspersed, and the whole is tastefully and brilliantly illuminated. In the different streets between the temples are displayed miniature bas-reliefs, representing battles, hunts, scenes of nomadic life—and all in butter. In the course of the evening the Grand Llama, or Buddha, goes round to inspect the flowers, his way through the crowd being cleared by Llamas armed with large whips. When this inspection is over, and the great dignitary has retired within his sanctuary, the whole scene becomes one of mad excitement. Dancing, sing-

ing, shouting, screaming, tumbling head over heels—all is carried to the highest and wildest pitch during the night ; but when the sun again opens the portals of the east, peace has resumed her sway, the pilgrims may be seen slowly, and with drooping heads, wending their homeward way along the mountains, and the calm seems more welcome from the contrast of the preceding eve.

But what has become of the wondrous flowers ? Alas ! every trace of them has disappeared ; the bas-reliefs have been demolished and thrown into the ravines ; and the work on which so much skill, time, and patience have been bestowed, in a few short hours is cast a prey to the ravenous crows. How lamentable is this waste, not only of a material applicable to the sustenance of man, but, far worse, of the talent thus vainly lavished on a production of so evanescent a character—a talent which, under better auspices, might doubtless be rendered subservient to high and noble purposes. Let us hope the time is not very distant when a brighter light will illumine the simple but still darkened minds of our Thibetan brethren ; when the knowledge of the true God and Saviour shall supersede the vain and superstitious worship of Buddha, and the divine image, re-impressed upon the soul, shall lead every faculty to be dedicated to the glory and service of the Creator.

Before we quite take our departure, may not this visit to the feast of flowers present to the thinking mind the following most valuable reflection ? If we, in our enlightened state, individually examine our labours of the past three months, and bring all to the touchstone of utility, how much will there remain that is more solid and more permanent than the flowers of the Llamas of Kounboum ?

A DAY OR TWO AT BEDFORD.

THE opening days of last November wearing an aspect unusually sunshiny and propitious, we were induced, before closing our occasional migrations for the season, and betaking ourselves finally to winter quarters, into accepting a standing invitation from a friend located on the banks of the Ouse, and paying a visit of curiosity to the town of Bedford. Alighting from the railway carriage at dusk, we traversed the long street which forms the principal part of the old town, and crossed the handsome bridge which spans the river, in the early twilight of a frosty evening. From the dense population, the busy marketing traffic, the brilliancy and splendour of the shops, almost metropolitan in their physiognomy, that for some distance line the way, and the general air of business at that particular hour, we might almost have fancied that we were still in London and perambulating one of its thousand commercial channels. These appearances, however, vanished as we proceeded, and gave place by degrees to a quiet interrupted only by the rustling of the sere leaves on the trees overhead, which here at all points are seen mingling their foliage with walls, roofs, and chimney-tops.

An early walk next morning led us past St. Peter's church, with its picturesque Norman tower, half embosomed by umbrageous trees, to the top of Foster Hill, where an extramural cemetery is in course of construction, and whence an extensive view of the town of Bedford and the rich vale, or rather low flat level of alluvial land, in which it lies, is obtained. The landscape viewed from this point is one of vast extent, and of very peculiar description—reminding us strikingly of the one which Rubens painted of his own château and its illimitable background, which now hangs in the National Gallery. Its chief peculiarity, apart from the vast unbroken level which it offers to the eye, is the immense number of spire-shaped poplar trees which in every direction point their summits to the sky : they would have to be numbered by thousands ; and any artist who should paint the picture as seen from this point would be accused of extravagance in regard to poplars, even though he left out one half of them.

Bedford has five parish churches ; and, on returning again to the town, we are struck with the ancient and picturesque aspect of some of them. That of St. Paul's is a fine specimen of mixed English architecture, and has a handsome tower, surmounted by a lofty octagonal spire ; in the interior are some remarkable antiquities, which, however, our want of leisure would not permit us to examine. Among the other buildings which cannot fail to strike the stranger's attention, are the library and foundation schools. The suburbs of the town boast an unusual share of handsome residences, terraces, and detached villas, palpably the dwellings of persons in easy circumstances ; and the town itself, though not by any means wanting in quarters characterised by poverty and squalor, is on the whole far cleaner, more open, airy, and well-ventilated than the average of English towns containing an equally numerous population. But, in our view, the river Ouse constitutes the principal ornament of Bedford, and the noble bridge which spans it in the centre of the town its most picturesque object. It is to be regretted, however, for the inhabitants, and it is equally tantalising to a stranger, that the banks of the river are rendered totally inaccessible to the public. This is a most mischievous and culpable oversight, if it be not something worse, on the part of the corporation or of the landowners of the district. One bank of the river, at least, should have been retained as common property, for the re-creation of the inhabitants. The Ouse is a clear and beautiful stream, winding along between fertile fields and wooded banks, and navigable up to Bedford, though the navigation must be somewhat tedious and little profitable, looking to the fact that the river winds a course of forty miles in accomplishing a distance of nine. Should Bedford ever rise to the distinction of a commercial town, the navigation would be abbreviated by canals, which, in this favourable district, might be cut at the minimum cost of such undertakings.

The ancient bridge was taken down in 1811, and with it disappeared the old gaol in which

John Bunyan was confined, and where he maintained himself by manufacturing tag-laces. The new edifice cost 15,000*l.* in its construction, and appears to be well worth the money. Other memorials of him who drew the "shining ones" have vanished within the last few years. The old Baptist chapel where he preached has been swept away, and upon its site a new edifice has arisen, massive enough to bid defiance to centuries, and spacious enough for the listening thousands who, for generations to come, shall throng to that shrine which will be hallowed in remembrance as long as the hearts of men shall respond to the touch of genius and truth. Here, at the evening service, it was our privilege to worship ; and here, in the adjoining vestry, we did as crowds of pilgrims have done before us—sat in the identical chair—one of that sort which Cowper alludes to—

" Whose back erect
Distress'd the weary loins that felt no ease,"

and which was evidently constructed in that simple time when

" No want of timber was or felt or feared
In Albion's happy isle,"

but in which the worthy John, who scorned the appliances of luxury, was accustomed to repose himself.

The following morning—a warm south wind blowing, and the sun shining brilliantly—we set off for Elstow, the birthplace of Bunyan and the scene of much of his youthful life. Nothing is left of the cottage in which he first saw the light—not a stone or a plank—only the ground on which it stood ; but there, in a meadow apart from the turnpike-road, stands the church with its broad, massive, pyramidal tower situated away from the edifice, and in which Bunyan, when a youth, officiated as one of the bell-ringers. The two hundred years which have passed away since then, have apparently done nothing towards the decay of its solid masonry. Bunyan, when his conscience smote him on account of his sins, dreaded that it might fall and crush him, and listened at safe distance to the pealing of his comrades, in which he longed to join, yet shrank afraid. The tower, unless removed by human hands, will probably stand for a dozen centuries to come ; and, stand as long as it may, it shall not outlast the fame of him who, pricked by the pangs of remorse, shrank fearfully from beneath its shadow. Here, too, in the churchyard, is yet pointed out the old tree beneath which sat the aged woman who rebuked John Bunyan as the most abandoned reprobate in the whole parish ; and whose rebuke, as he tells us himself, entered into his soul and clave to his conscience.

Elstow is famous for its cattle-fairs, occurring twice a year ; and, by an accidental coincidence, the fair was in full tide at the hour of our visit. The extensive pasture lands of the Vale of Bedford are favourable for the rearing of cattle, and at the biennial fairs of Elstow a prodigious number of oxen, sheep, and horses are periodically brought to market. The

weather being fine, an unusual concourse both of cattle and buyers were upon the ground, which consists of a couple of meadows adjoining the churchyard. The fair was purely a business assembly, wanting in the usual adjuncts of rare-shows, conjurers, and theatricals, and abounding in capital specimens of the sturdy race of English yeomen and practical farmers and stock-breeders. We had some difficulty in elbowing through the droves of horned cattle, and some amusement in witnessing the capers of a hundred or two of wild colts and ponies unused to bit or bridle, and urged to the exhibition of all manner of antics by those whose business it was to display their capabilities.

Returning to Bedford by a picturesque and circuitous route, partly bordered by gigantic poplars, and affording a view of the County Lunatic Asylum and of the County Infirmary, we were introduced by a friend to the domicile of a worthy dame residing in the outskirts of the town, who favoured us with the sight of some original documents in the handwriting of the great philanthropist Howard, who, as many of our readers are aware, mostly resided, when not abroad on one or other of his benevolent missions, at the village of Cardington, within a short distance of Bedford. The documents we saw consist of letters on matters merely private and domestic; and they yield no other information beyond the fact that Howard was a man of method and of business habits, who constantly kept his house in order, and whether absent from or present at home, maintained a careful supervision of his affairs. Together with these documents, from which we observed with regret that some unceremonious collector of autographs had cut off the signatures, we saw the miniature of Howard's beloved wife Harriet, who died while she was yet young, after giving birth to her child, Howard's unhappy son, whose history affords a lamentable contrast to the virtues of his sire.

Cardington is a neat village within an easy walk of Bedford. Howard had inherited an estate there from his father; and thither, after the death of his first wife, and his return from his Lisbon expedition and his imprisonment in France, he retired to enjoy in quiet the scenes and to revive the associations of his childhood. He enlarged the patrimonial estate by the purchase of another property, and set about improving it, sparing neither labour nor expense in the prosecution of his plans, which had for their object, not merely the cultivation of his lands, but the moral, industrial, and religious training of the sons and daughters of the soil. His genuine philanthropy was as active in the immediate circle of his own home as it was afterwards amid the dangers and difficulties of his English and foreign missions, and, considering the narrow limits of its operation, was crowned with as complete success. While engaged in the prosecution of these congenial labours, he married his second wife, Henrietta Leeds, and, up to the time of her sudden and untimely death, enjoyed a degree of happiness which rarely falls to the lot of mortals. But Howard was designed for a grander work than that

which in his own home he had undertaken. The death of his idolised wife, which almost bowed him to the grave for a time, relaxed the tie which bound him to Cardington, and sent him abroad in the world on that glorious mission which he of all living men was alone qualified to undertake. How well he performed his mighty work is known to the nations of the earth. Now and then, between the acts of the grand sacred drama of his life, he returned with a childlike yearning to the home of his youth and the grave of his lost love. When at length he visited Cardington for the last time, previous to his final tour from which he was never to return, it was to take a farewell of all that he had loved so long. He knew that his death was near, and he came to provide for the prosperity of the objects of his care after he should have quitted them for ever. He made his will, and bequeathed a considerable share of his property to the poor of Cardington, and made a perpetual provision for the education of the villagers. He parted from his humble friends as a father from his children: his last interviews with them were most solemn and affecting; they were the advice of one who felt "that he should not be permitted to return and lay his bones in his native land." On the 5th of July, 1789, Howard quitted England, which he never saw again: six months after, he caught an infection at the bedside of a patient whom his humanity had induced him to visit, and in a few days was no more. When dying, he said: "Let no monument or monumental inscription be made to mark where I am laid; but lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial on my grave, and let me be forgotten." Cherson, in Russian Tartary, has the honour of his remains; but the world is full of his fame; and, what is infinitely better than that, the world is richer for the deeds of his great life—deeds which have made law and justice more merciful, and humanity more human.

John Howard—John Bunyan—these are the names which shed a halo upon the town of Bedford; the one a man of abundant wealth—the other of excelling poverty—yet both transcendently rich in grandeur of impulse and nobility of soul. Such men are the true heroes of our race—the realities of our piebald history; and to them, and to all that speaks of them, mankind will ever turn with longing, loving eyes from the shams and self-seeking of the multitude.

A visit to Bedford without some notice of the numerous charities with which it abounds would be accounted an anomaly. The variety and magnitude of the charitable endowments of this town are talked of all over the kingdom, and therefore some account of them will naturally be expected here. The most important of them are the foundations of sir William Harpur, a native of Bedford, who was lord mayor of London about three hundred years ago. He founded a free school in 1566, leaving for its support property in Bedford and in St. Andrew, Holborn, which property now yields a revenue which we have heard stated at 18,000*l.* The school is free to all inhabitants paying 10*l.* a

year rent, and it gives eight scholarships of not less than 80*l.* per annum, in the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, or Dublin. A national school for both sexes, and an English school for boys, are also endowed from the same fund, as well as a hospital for the maintenance of fifty children. Ten of the boys are every year apprenticed with a premium of (it is said) 30*l.*, and five girls, with fees of half that amount; and if they behave well, they are presented with a further sum at the end of their term. A large sum, little, if anything, short of 1000*l.* is annually distributed in marriage portions to girls of good character in the town, and the sum of 500*l.* or more is applied to the relief of decayed housekeepers. Then there are threescore and six almshouses for old people, who are allowed from 7*s.* to 10*s.* a week each, besides a yearly sum for clothing. Besides the Harpur charities, there are similar endowments, though of less extent, founded by Mr. Alexander Leith, by alderman Newton, and by Mr. Thomas Christie.

How much good these charities do, by aiding the honest and industrious poor to educate their children—by putting the youth of the town in the way of earning an honest livelihood—or by affording the destitute a refuge in their old age: or how much harm they do, on the other hand, by relaxing the springs of exertion, and fostering a mean, shuffling, and dependent spirit—by encouraging idleness and a cringing, servile, and hypocritical self-seeking:—these are points upon which we cannot pretend to decide, and the decision of which must rest upon testimony we cannot produce regarding the ability and scrutinising supervision of those to whose care the management of the funds is intrusted. Charity is a divine attribute, and godlike in its flow; but this indiscriminate bestowal upon the undesigning and the unstriving, of that which desert and industry and genuine need only ought to obtain, is not charity, but a bribe inviting to the meanest of vices, and paving the easy way to sure and permanent degradation.

AN ANECDOTE OF THE LATE DR. ROBERT NEWTON.

A MISERABLE woman, of the name of Mrs. Martin, was going about the country delivering lectures in favour of what was popularly called "Socialism;" that is, of atheism in theory, and licentiousness in practice. She had come to Manchester, where several of the working-classes, who did not like to retain God in their thoughts, paid the sum of two-pence an evening to hear her vile harangues against all religion, and even moral government. To obtain further notoriety, it was arranged that she, accompanied by her ungodly partisans, should attend the missionary meeting which, according to public announcement, was to be held in the Methodist chapel, Salford. Accordingly, when the meeting assembled, she and her accomplices took their places together in the gallery. While the business of the meeting was in progress, she arose and demanded a hearing, in opposition not only to

Christianity, but to all religion; when, of course, great confusion prevailed, her friends requiring that she should be heard, and others declaring that she should not.

Mr. Newton, who was on the platform, rose in all the confidence of truth and righteousness, and, in the full force of his trumpet-voice, exclaimed: "And is it come to this? Is it come to this? that in this Christian country a company of Christian people cannot meet in one of their own places of worship, which their own hands have reared, for the purpose of devising means for sending the gospel to the heathen, but they must meet with an unseemly interruption like the present? An interruption by whom? By a woman, whose modesty ought to have restrained her from such an outrage. One of the greatest men that ever lived was St. Paul; and he has said, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.' I should like to know what kind of respect that woman pays to her husband; and who takes care of her children, while she is gadding about the country, endeavouring to corrupt the principles and practice of all to whom she can gain access."

In this address he was supported by the cheers of the meeting; and during the delivery of it the woman sank down in the pew, and covered her face: when a workman exclaimed, in the broad Lancashire dialect: "Newton has shot the Martin;" and another responded: "I will hear that fellow preach."

Mr. Newton then stated that the meeting had been convened for a specific purpose, and from that purpose they would not depart; but they were neither ashamed to avow their belief of the gospel, nor to meet its adversaries. He gave his address, and invited any persons who had doubts respecting the momentous question which had just been mooted, to visit him, pledging himself kindly to hear their objections, and to give the reasons which satisfied his own mind that the gospel is the very truth of God.

He then spoke on the subject of missions to the heathen, their nature and purpose, and the benefits which had resulted from them; appealing to the people for the truth of his statements, and to their liberality and kindness in support of the good cause; reminding all present that they had free access to the meeting, and that no twopence had been demanded of any one. The consequence was a handsome collection; and, in the course of a short time, a working-man called at Mr. Newton's house, saying that he had accepted the invitation which was given at the missionary meeting, his faith in the gospel having been shaken, and his mind being ill at rest in a state of doubt and uncertainty. Mr. Newton listened to the man's case, and then gave him such a view of the gospel, its nature, evidences, and benefits, that the relents of the poor man were kindled; he began to pray and to read his Bible; the truth beamed upon his mind, in its own clear and heavenly light; he believed with the heart unto righteousness, and became a new man in Christ Jesus.